

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Castlewood School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

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Dates of On Site Visit: January 9 and 10, 2006

Date of Report: January 30, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Table B – District/Agency Instructional Staff Information
- Table C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
- Table D – Statewide Assessment Information
- Table E – Enrollment Information
- Table F – Placement Alternatives
- Table G – Disabling Conditions
- Table H – Exiting Information
- Parent Survey
- Referrals
- Publications of Child Find Notices
- Comprehensive plan
- Yearly Child Find Results

Promising practice

The Castlewood K-12 staff participated in a Data Retreat, which was conducted in November of 2002. The Data Retreat involved hands-on analysis of four lenses of data: student data, professional practices, programs and structures, and parent and community involvement.

Working collaboratively and reflectively, the Castlewood staff examined test data and classroom grades, which enabled them to paint a picture of student achievement. They also correlated student achievement with school programs. Considerable time was devoted to analyzing the data and determining areas of strength and weakness.

As strengths and weakness in academic achievement were discovered, staff began to explore professional development that had been provided to teachers in the district, as well as examine professional practices.

Once the data had been mined, staff discussed and recorded observations made concerning the data they had compiled, and formulated hypotheses concerning student achievement in the Castlewood district. Goals were then articulated for the district and strategies were implemented to help achieve the goals.

The administration and instructional staff have continued to keep their data current. The fall of 2003 and the fall of 2004 saw a continuation of the process begun in 2002, with the newest data available being added to the compilation.

During the summer of 2005 the district began mapping curriculum. All teachers started the process of mapping their individual content areas. K-12 science staff mapped all of their classes, and the result was a K-12 vertical alignment of the district's science curriculum. Language arts teachers also participated in the year-long process of updating and refining the science maps during the current school year.

Castlewood offers an after school program 4 days a week for 40 minutes offering individualized help to any student that needs the service. The program is provided for students in grades 2-6 who would like to have a quiet place to do homework after school. Supervision and assistance for students is provided by paraprofessionals. The program is coordinated by the school counselor.

Castlewood offers a preschool program for all 4 year olds 3 days a week for half-days. This program is offered to all students. Parents pay a minimal fee for children to attend; general funds from the district cover the remainder of the costs for the program.

There is also a parenting program offered to any parent in the district. This program started in the spring of 2005. The program is coordinated by the school counselor. The curriculum material used is Common Sense Parenting.

Meets requirements

The school district has in place appropriate procedures for child find for students birth through 21 years. Child find procedures are found in the comprehensive plan on 12A and 12B. This includes procedures, public awareness campaign, documentation, child count and screening. The Castlewood district meets the needs of all students in the referral process.

Based on the district's comprehensive plan, the school provides for children with disabilities that are eligible for special education and are voluntarily enrolled in private schools by their parents to participate in services in accordance with the requirements of Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). When the school district refers or places a child with disabilities in a private school or facility, the school district ensures special education and related services are provided in accordance with requirements of Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

The school district follows and adheres to the state guidelines for reporting of students suspended, expelled, or dropped out as per the reports required by the state regulations. In addition, the school district meets the requirements to ensure it employs or contracts with an adequate supply of personnel who are appropriately supervised, and fully licensed or certified, to work with children with disabilities

Needs improvement

Paraprofessionals are not evaluated each year.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring team could not validate the participation of the district in the data retreat/analysis and curriculum mapping as areas of promising practice for the district.

The review team validated the preschool, after school and parenting program as promising practices in the district. In addition, the review team validated the peer tutoring program as a promising practice. High school students participate in the peer tutoring program. Students who participate in the program earn one elective credit. Students are required to keep a daily log and write a report at the end of the semester. The program, which is in its third year, is coordinated by the school counselor.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for Principle One: General Supervision, as concluded by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with the improvement area identified by the district.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Table C – Suspension and Expulsion Information
- Table E – Enrollment Information
- Table F – Placement Alternatives
- Table K – Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information
- Table L – Complaints
- Table M – Hearings
- Table N - Monitoring
- Age at referral
- Number of students screened
- Personnel development education
- Preschool age
- School age
- Personnel training
- Budget information
- Comprehensive Plan
- Surveys

Meets requirements

The Castlewood School District provides FAPE for children birth through 21 as determined by their IFSP and IEP needs. The district follows state and federal regulations accordingly to ensure FAPE for all students.

The district has had no students suspended or expelled. Policies are in place to address this issue should the need arise.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for Principle Two: Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice

and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Table G – Disabling Conditions
- Table H – Exiting Information
- Table I – Placement by Age
- Table J – Placement by Disabling Condition
- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parent Teacher report forms
- Initial referral

Meets requirements

Written notice and consent for evaluation contains all required content. A Multi-Disciplinary Team Report was available in 100% of the files of students with learning disabilities. Nineteen out of 20 parents surveyed indicated they receive copies of test results. Parent surveys indicated that test results have been explained in a manner they understood. Copies of the evaluation reports are sent to parents with the prior notice for the IEP meeting or given to them at the IEP meeting.

The district ensures reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements to ensure students are appropriately evaluated for continuing eligibility. The student's IEP team uses the evaluations data to determine eligibility and the needed services to meet the student's needs. Functional evaluations are available and a written report is completed on all students

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The review team agrees with the steering committee that data for Principle Three: Appropriate Evaluation meets the requirements, with the exception of determination of needed evaluation data, and eligibility criteria. See information under: Needs Improvement and Out of Compliance

Needs improvement

ARSD 24:05:25:04.02 Determination of needed evaluation data As part of an evaluation, the individual education program team and other individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to interpret evaluation data, determine whether the child has a disability, and determine whether the child needs special education and related services, as appropriate, shall review existing evaluation data on the child, including: evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child; current classroom-based assessments and observations; and observations by teachers and related services providers, and, based on the review and input from the students' parents, identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine; whether the student has a particular category of disability as describe in this article; the present levels of performance and educational needs of the student; and whether the student needs special education and related services.

File review and a staff interview completed by the monitoring team indicated parental input into the evaluation process was not found in a file nor was the teacher familiar with this requirement. In addition, documentation that previous ability scores would be used to determine eligibility was not found.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Table L – Complaints
- Table M – Hearings
- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parental Right document
- Consent and prior notice forms
- Public awareness information
- FERPA disclosure

Meets requirements

The school district's policies and procedures, parental surveys and file reviews indicate the district ensures notification to parents of their rights. Consent is obtained for all placements by the school district.

The district has not had a request for a due process hearing within the past 5 years. Due process hearing procedures are specified in the district comprehensive plan. The school district has policies and procedures to address complaint issues. There have been no complaints at this time. Castlewood School District policies and procedures provide all parents the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning their child in the provision of a free and appropriate public education.

The school district has policies and procedures for selection, training, and administrative considerations regarding the appointment of a surrogate parent for a child with disabilities. A list of individuals who would serve as a surrogate parent if needed is available in the district.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for Principle Four: Procedural Safeguards meets requirements.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Parent Surveys
- Student Surveys
- Comprehensive Plan
- Teacher file reviews
- Personnel Training
- Budget information

Meets requirements

Based on student file reviews, the Castlewood School District ensures that written notice is provided for all IEP meetings and includes the required content. The IEP teams are composed of the appropriate team membership. An interpreter is present when needed by parents. Following a meeting, classroom teachers receive copies of goals and objectives for each student. Individual Education Program meetings are held annually for all students, and meet timelines.

The IEP goals are linked to the present levels of performance in 23 of 23 files reviewed. The IEPs consistently contain skill based, measurable/observable annual goals. Progress reports were available as appropriate in the students' files. All transition services are provided to students 16 and older, and younger if there is a need.

Out of compliance

Agency representatives who were likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services were invited to participate in 2 of 6 IEP meetings based on file reviews for students of transition age.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that data for Principle Five: Individualized Education Program meets requirements, except in the areas of present level of performance and transition. See information under: Out of Compliance. The monitoring team was not able to validate agency representatives responsible for providing or paying for transition services were not in attendance or invited to participate in IEP meetings based on file reviews for students of transition age.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of individualized education program (IEP)

Present level of performance

A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the skill areas affected by the student's identified disability. The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process.

In twelve of twenty-three files reviewed, present levels of performance did not consistently contain the required content (i.e. specific skill area(s) affected by the student's disability, to include strengths and needs, along with how the disability affects the student's involvement in the

general curriculum). Parental input was consistently documented in the present levels of performance. File reviews and interviews with staff indicated a need to improve functional assessments to acquire the skill-based information to develop present levels of performance for students eligible for special education services.

ARSD 24:05:27:13.02 Transition Services and ARSD 24:05:27:01.03(1) Content of individualized education program (IEP)

Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, designed within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Through file reviews and interview with staff, the review team concluded transition assessments are completed; however, the information was not documented in student's present level of performance (PLOP). The present levels of performance for the five transition areas (employment, independent living, community participation, adult services and post secondary) should be based upon the functional assessment information. The present levels of performance lacked the student's strengths, weakness/needs regarding school to secondary activities. In addition, file reviews indicated a plan was not developed as to how the students would meet their postsecondary outcomes. This documentation was found in seven of ten transition age student files reviewed as completed by the resource room teacher. Transition services and activities need to be utilized as a planning device to help ensure the students achieved their desired outcomes for employment and independent living. The student's IEPs did not have a coordinated set of activities which addressed the individual student's needs.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.02 Development, review and revision of the IEP- Consideration of Special Factors

In six of twenty-three student files reviewed, behavioral assessment and/or present levels of performance contained information regarding the impact of student behavior on educational performance. However, in developing the IEPs for these students, the team checked "no," that the behavior does not impede learning and did not address strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports to address the behaviors.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment
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After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- E – Enrollment Information
- F – Placement Alternatives
- G – Disabling Conditions
- I – Placement by Age
- J – Placement by Disabling Condition
- File Reviews
- Surveys

Meets requirements

There are seven students in a self-contained classroom. Two students are from out of district and one early childhood student in the district. Twenty-one out of 24 students surveyed indicated they are educated with other students their age. The district has policies and procedures in place for addressing the LRE of students.

Validation Results

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that the agency is meeting the requirements for Principle Six: Least Restrictive Environment.